FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

"For a world united in prayer"

Volume XXIX / Number 3 / June 1978

The purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

Volume XXIX / Number 3 / June 1978

Articles

5 Special Prayer *by Thomas Merton*

6 On The Sharing of Pain *by Elizabeth Twyeffort*

8 Gandhi On Prayer *by Herrymon Maurer*

12 From A Summer Diary *by Emma S. McLaughlin*

17 Flower Symphony *by Georgiana Lieder Lahr*

18 The Holidays Jesus Observed (Part II) *by Samuel M. Silver*

27 An Encounter With Ernst Toller *by Jerre Mangione*

30 A Minister Writes To A Thief *by Peter James Lee*

1 Editorial *35* Book Reviews

Poems

3 Prayer *by Brunice C. Cole, Jr.*
15 The Jelly-Maker *by Pollyanna Sedziol*
26 Dear Lord *by Nixeon Civille Handy*
29 Smoke *by Joy Bergman*

Back Cover- - -
Oneness *by Marion J-Richardson*

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EDITORIAL

LONELINESS – 111

THE PAIN OF KNOWING you are alone is often relieved by fantasies of being special or by other anodynes of distraction and escape which are essentially nothing but temporary painkillers.

Killing pain does not make a tolerable life. No matter if you use the most highminded forms of it, it doesn't work. I have more than one friend dying of overdoses of entertainment.

According to my own experience, everything but God's reality fails us, always loses its power to work the longed-for spell. By some law of the human spirit which I have not seen explicated anywhere, we seem to be obliged to live by that reality or pay a heavy penalty. Sooner or later we make up our minds to do this, not because we are so virtuous and fine, but because we are smart enough to see that if we fail to do so, we do it at our own peril.

Everyone to their own taste. I put off the making of this crucial decision in my own way. You used your own way. One of the most frightening of all ways, partly because it is so popular and can be chosen with so much acclaim, partly because I have seen it wreak such damage, is to conform---that is, to give up one's individuality and the search for identity for the satisfactions of believing we're just like everybody else: no better and no worse but (really) the salt of the earth. In the choosing of such a position, we have the appearance of setting aside all claims to ego, self, and specialness, we make ourselves seem okay. In return we enjoy the security of being one of a crowd: not alone.

The difficulties that go with belonging to a crowd have kept me out of them---at least since my younger days. It is not easy to surrender our minds and feelings and inmost beliefs to a group. A group---except in the rarest instances---is always a tyranny, with all deviations and infractions not only immediately reported but punished. In other words, membership in a group requires certain talents. Lacking all of these, I found that a group invariably made me feel lonelier and more of an outcast than ever.

It is possible for me to view groups therefore only from the outside, only as one who has been occasionally the victim of them and often the witness to the terrible things they have done to others. The most terrible

Tom Dunham

things were always done in the name of the group, all of them the most respectable, for personal purposes unknown even to those who did the terrible things. Crimes committed in the same of some precious truth are committed with a relish (call it righteousness) that is not available to the mugger, the burglar, or the murderer. . . . These are the really scarey people in the world. I do not know how to deal with them except to keep away from them. Their capacity to not know strikes me as dishonesty bordering on insanity. Since for all their wickedness they are still human, I can only guess that in some part of themselves they do know that they are doing wicked things with wicked glee and therefore must suffer a lonelier loneliness than most of us have had to face.

Although these monstrously sick people make reality monstrous, there is no hope of changing them. Keep away as I do. They do not know the penalty they are paying.

The fundamental life of each of us who does not try to escape is something much better. It seems to be a struggle with ourselves to accept the reality of our own particular lives. Each is unique. And the paradoxical thing about this solitary effort is that, once all escapes, evasions, and anodynes have been tried and found wanting and given up, we find in it the only release there is from our loneliness.

It is as if the root-cause of our loneliness all along had been nothing but our separation from God. ---P.G.

PRAYER

Brunice C. Cole, Jr.

Prayer is the longing
in man's heart to talk with God
--- his great Creator.

MORE SWAN COMING

Eleanor Ebersole

"DID YOU SEE the swan?" asked the child who had climbed to a ledge on the mountain that formed the water gap.

She heard no answer.

"Hundreds were in the river. They began to fly. I climbed here to see them."

There was no answer, not from the mountain.

"I wonder where they went," she murmured.

The water gap lay still. White clouds and pink-budding trees seemed to know nothing of the swans.

"They have all gone," she said out loud. "All of them gone--not one of them saying where."

The child sat down.

"What made them go without me?" she wondered.

"More coming," whispered the wind.

Low, back down the river valley, appeared the white flapping wings.

"More coming," echoed the child, jumping up to welcome them.

The swans rose gradually, surely, until they passed close by. On through the gap they flew. Each moment they grew smaller until wings and birds were the same, small silver flecks in the sunlight.

'I've been waiting for you!'' called the child.

No fleck of silver came back.

"Turning into silver was not what I expected," said the child, beginning the descent.

"More coming," called the wind, but the child did not return. The land to which the swan went was not like any that she knew.

SPECIAL PRAYER

Offered at the First Spiritual Summit Conference in Calcutta

by Father Thomas Merton

OH, GOD, WE ARE ONE WITH YOU. You have made us one with You. You have taught us that if we are open to one another, You dwell in us. Help us to preserve this openness and to fight for it with all our hearts. Help us to realize that there can be no understanding where there is mutual rejection. Oh, God, in accepting one another wholeheartedly, fully, completely, we accept You, and we thank You, and we adore You, and we love You with our whole being, because our being is Your being, our spirit is rooted in Your spirit. Fill us then with love, and let us be bound with love as we go our diverse ways, and which make You witness to the ultimate reality that is love. Love has overcome. Love is victorious.

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ON THE SHARING OF PAIN

ELIZABETH TWYEFFORT

I REMEMBER WHEN I WAS ABOUT TEN YEARS OLD. Summer was at its height. Sunny days called everyone to the beach. Every hour was a golden treasure.

I was sick in bed with pains in my stomach, feeling sorry for myself and lonely. I can see my mother now and hear her saying, "Darling child, if I could take your pains myself, I would do it gladly."

These memories have remained to support me. Through them I have come to understand that real love accepts sacrifice.

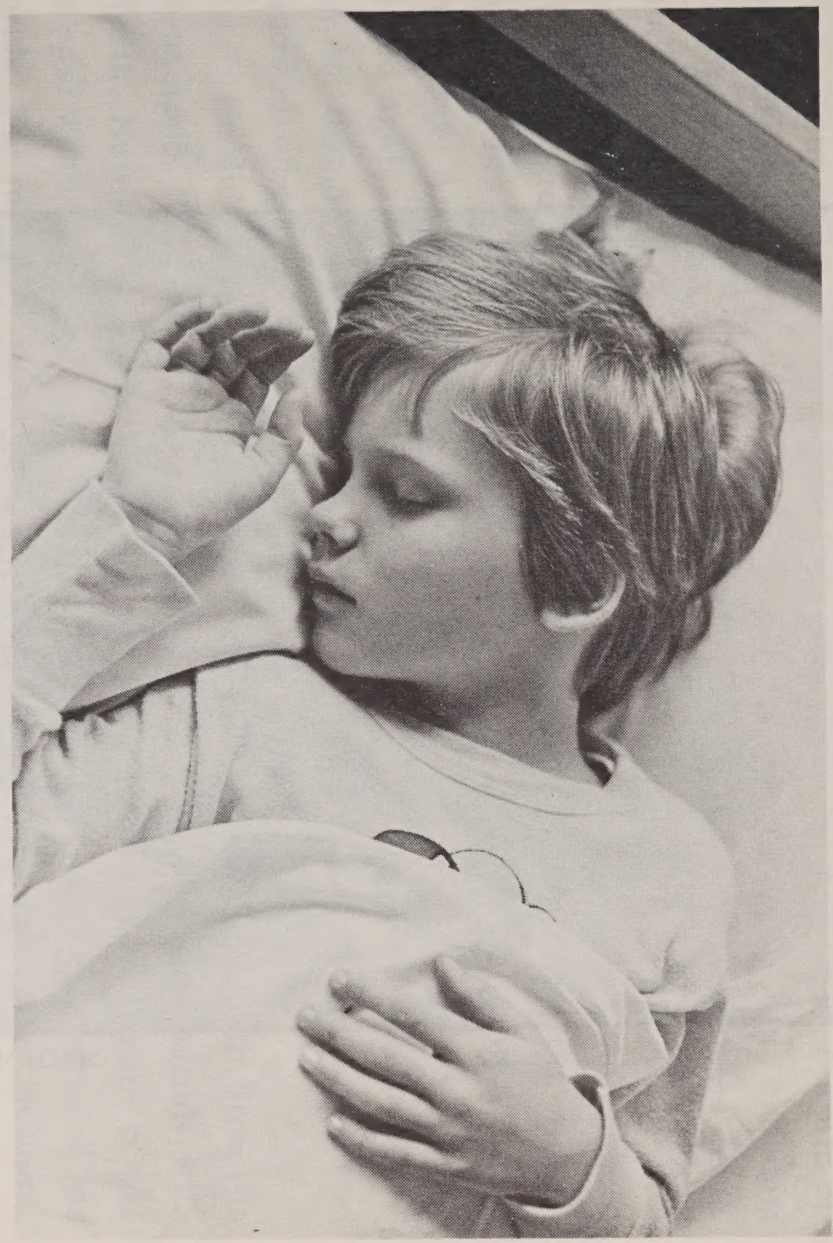
When one of my little girls was sick, I would go softly to her bed at night and gaze at her pretty flushed cheeks. Instinctively, in unworded blessing. I would place my hand on her sleeping body as lightly as a butterfly come to rest.

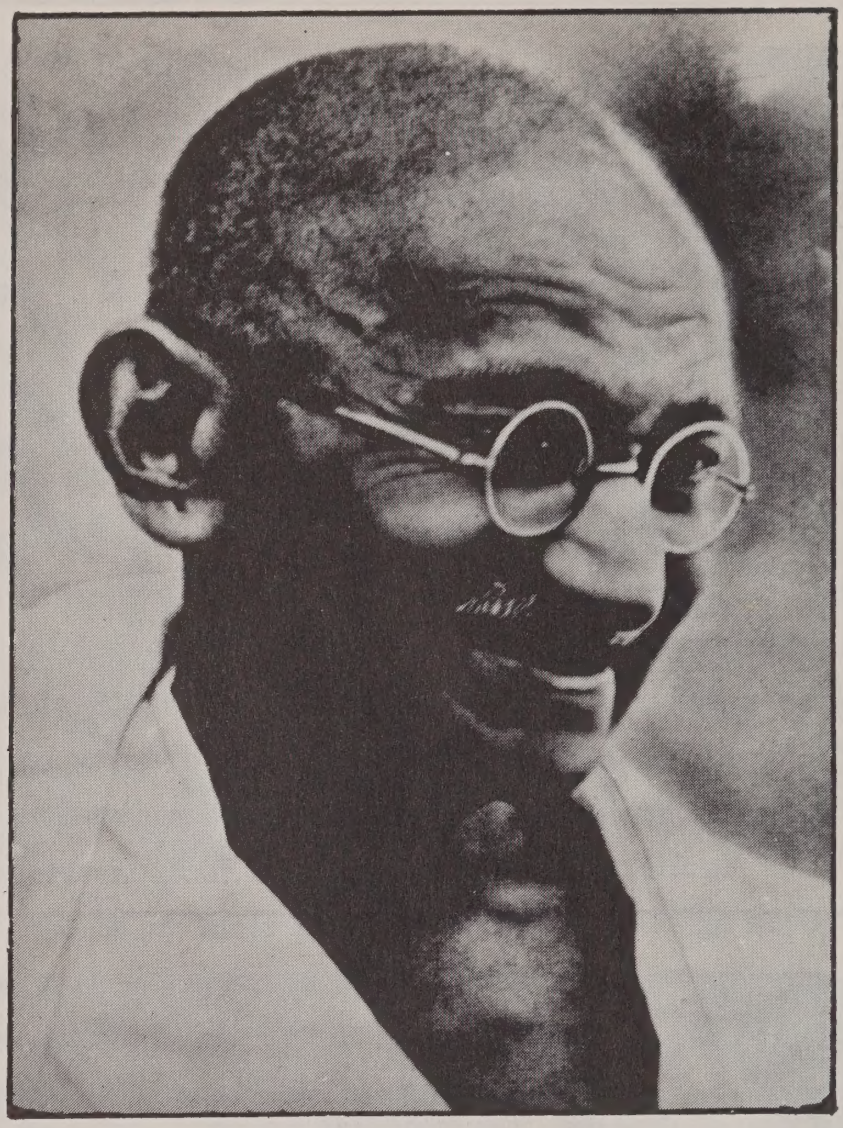
A mother senses the pain of her little ones. This is her burden: her sacrifice of time and all desires of a personal nature, waiting indefinitely for healing to come and then for renewal of the normal patterns of love. In these moments a mother grows in stature, little knowing that there will be larger and larger burdens to shoulder and that some day she will look back and wonder at her innocence of what time would eventually bring to her life.

The sun and moon rule our days as well as our emotions. The larger the mountain, the greater the shadow, because the greater its exposure to both the light and darkness.

As time shortens the trail ahead, we gradually learn to shift our burdens to bearable positions, knowing that they will fall away with shadows when we are at last one with the sun and the moon and stand resplendent in our own right---released from life is vicissitudes.

Tom Dunham





BETTMANN ARCHIVE

GANDHI ON PRAYER

HERRYMON MAURER

INTO A WORLD LIGHTED BY TRUTH, fed by it, kept alive by it, but yet ignorant of it, there came a man who sought it, felt it, and declared it. Truth is of God, and it is God. It is that which all persons seek without any knowing fully why they seek it. Men and women often forget it until it grows within one of themselves. This man, whom people called Mahatma, the Great Soul, lived so that men and women could know that there is a power more real than the power of money or weapons or prisons,

and that through it the ancient chains of violence and oppression and deceit can finally be broken.

Many persons saw Gandhi and were moved by him, but the world of convention did not see him. For the world struck him with blows, cast him into prison, betrayed him with bloodshed, killed him, and after his death sought to speak ill of him. Indeed, it is conventional now to complain that his teaching lacks social aim, that his influence in India and throughout the world grows weak, that he was no more than a moralistic sort of guru, and that his life was too religious to be political and too political to be religious. And in these complaints there may be validity of a sort. Measured against perfection, even great souls fall short. Gandhi's greatness is not that he achieved the ultimate of Truth, but that he grew in it and showed others how to grow.

He did not at any time believe he had only to speak Truth from the housetops. He was a man who made it his aim to experiment humbly with Truth. He said, "Man is a fallible being. He can never be sure of his steps. What he may regard as an answer to prayer may be an echo of his pride. For infallible guidance man has to have a perfectly innocent heart, incapable of evil. I can lay no such claim. Mine is a struggling, striving, erring, imperfect soul. But I can rise only by experimenting upon myself and others. I believe in the absolute oneness of God, and therefore also of humanity. What though we have bodies? We have but one soul. The rays of the sun are many through refraction. But they have the same source. I cannot, therefore, detach myself from the wickedest soul, nor may I be denied identity with the most virtuous. Whether, therefore, I will or not, I must involve in my own experiment the whole of my kind. Nor can I do without experiment. Life is but an endless series of experiments."

At his meetings for worship and his meetings for prayer, there was always silence and there was always singing. There were the chants of the Hindus and the hymns of the Christians. At regular hours there were the calls to Moslem worship. Very often someone read one of Gandhi's favorite verses: "God the ruler pervades all there is in this universe. Therefore renounce and dedicate all to Him, and then enjoy that portion that may fall to thy lot."

He taught that prayer was "a longing of the soul." This prayer was spoken daily: "Lead me from untruth to Truth. Lead me from darkness to light. Lead me from death to immortality."

He would not be rigid in his worship, for he said, "Our whole life is a prayer, and therefore we need not sit down at any particular hour to pray." And he said also, "God knows and anticipates our wants. The Deity does not need my supplication, but I, a very imperfect human being, do need His protection as a child that of his father." Out of prayer rose his experience of Truth, and he said, "Religion is not a thing alien to us; it has to be evolved out of us. It is always within us, with some consciously, with others quite unconsciously. And whether we worship this religious instinct through mental assistance or inward growth, no matter how it is done, it has got to be done if we want to do anything in the right manner or to achieve anything that is going to persist."

Gandhi said, "Each one has to find his peace from within. And peace, to be real, must be unaffected by outside circumstances." He said, "God needs no personal service. He serves his creatures without demanding any service for Himself in return. He is unique in this as in many other things. Therefore servants of God are to be known by the service they render to his creatures."

Saddened in 1938 by outbreaks of violence between Hindus and Moslems, he found himself in a slough of despond, but yet he said, "(God) can never be a matter for argument. If you would have me convince others by argument, I am floored. But I can tell you this --- that I am surer of His existence than of the fact that you and I are sitting in this room. I can also testify that I may live without air or water but not without Him. . . blast my faith in God, and I am dead."

His teaching of Truth was not set down in a block of words, nor was it spoken in a series of sermons. Gandhi went walking through towns and villages and cities, talking about practical matters of poverty and prejudice and giving straws of experience and wisps of thought, which fell by themselves into a single message and into one Truth. This is the essence of what he was heard to say:

". . . If we are, God is. . . . If God is not, we are not."

He reported: "I do simply perceive that whilst everything is ever-changing, ever-dying, there is underlying all that change a Living Power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves, and

re-creates. That in-forming Power or Spirit is God, and since nothing else that I see merely through the senses can or will persist, He alone is.

"And is this power benevolent or malevolent? I see it as purely benevolent. For I can see that in the midst of death, life persists; in the midst of untruth, truth persists; in the midst of darkness, light persists."

Gandhi spoke to the people of India, saying, "To me God is Truth and Love; God is ethics and morality; God is fearlessness; God is the source of Light and Life, and yet He is above and beyond all these. God is conscience. He is even the atheism of the atheist. For in His boundless heart God permits the atheist to live. He is the searcher of hearts. He transcends speech and reason. He knows us and our hearts better than we do ourselves. He does not take us at our word, for He knows that we often do not mean it, some knowingly and others unknowingly.

"God is personal to those who need His personal presence. He is embodied to those who need His touch. He is all things to all men. He is in us and yet above and beyond us. . . .

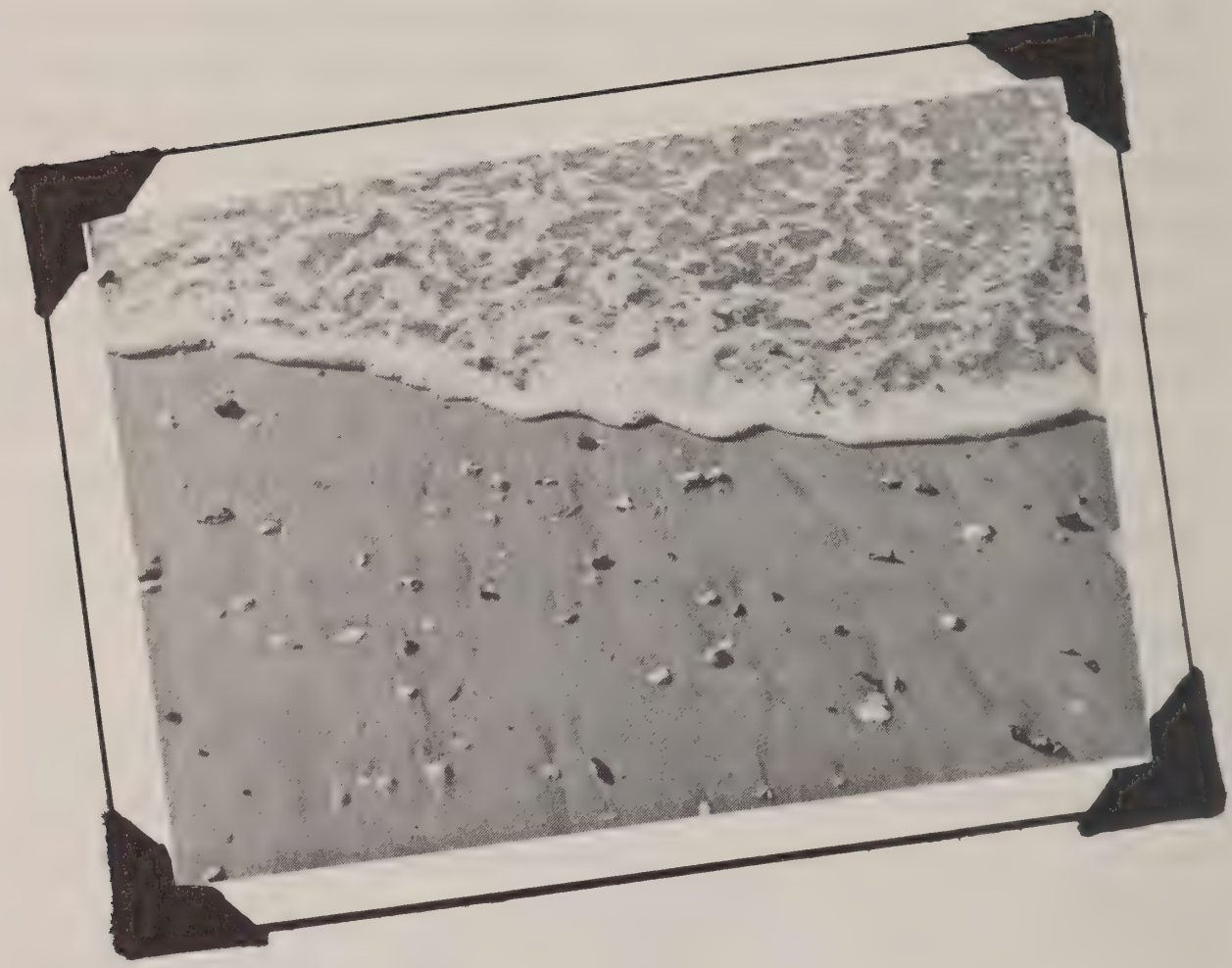
"God cannot cease to be because hideous immoralities or inhuman brutalities are committed in His name. He is long-suffering. He is patient, but He is also terrible. He is the most exacting personage in the world and the world to come. . . . And withal He is ever-forgiving, for He always gives us the chance to repent. He is the greatest Democrat the world knows, for He leaves us unfettered to make our own choice between good and evil. He is the greatest Tyrant ever known, for He often dashes the cup from our lips and under cover of free will leaves us a margin so wholly inadequate as to provide only mirth for Himself at our expense. . . .

"Relief will come only when there is the least hope of it. For such is the way of the cruelly kind Deity who insists upon testing his devotees through a fiery furnace and delights in humbling them to the dust. . . .

"Worship and prayer, therefore, are not to be performed with the lips but with the heart. That is why they can be performed equally by the dumb and the stammerer, by the ignorant and the stupid; and the prayers of those whose tongues are nectared, but whose hearts are full of poison, are never heard."

He spoke not of any single religion but of all Truth. He said, "The answer to my prayer is clear and emphatic, that God is not encased in a safe to be approached through a little hole bored in it, but that He is open

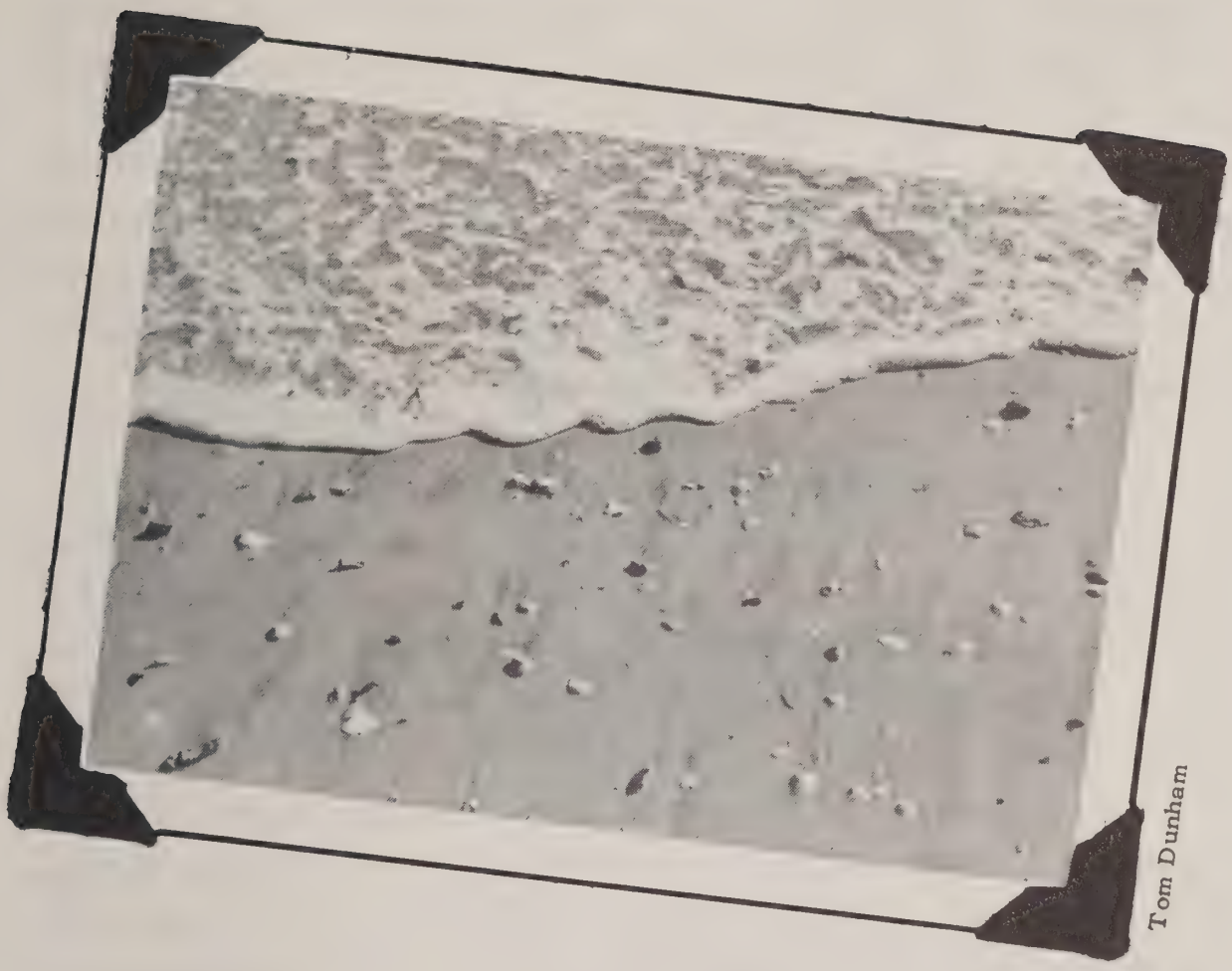
(Continued on page 32)



"To return to the ocean, if only for one day out of a year, was like returning home...was to be received again by my own"

From A Summer Diary

EMMA S. McLAUGHLIN



Tom Dunham

WE have returned from our vacation of one week, a jot and tittle of time in the broader expanse of a year, but how refreshing.

It was a week of great comparisons. The first several days were spent in the region of the Finger Lakes, the final ones in Washington, D.C., and Ocean City, Maryland. From a place of mountains, tumbling waters, and wide vistas, we travelled to a busy, crowded city and a resort town of wall-to-wall people---sun-worshippers---bent on storing all they could of light and warmth against the coming of winter. Of the two contrasts, I much preferred the former.

I have always loved the ocean. In a way, I have looked on it as a place of origins, an ancient mother. To return to it, if only for one day out of a year, was like returning home. To walk its sands and wade into its waves was to be received again by my own---to be at once refreshed. A great sense of peace and well-being would return as I sat gazing out across the incoming waves, lulled by their ceaseless murmur.

But it had always been the lonely stretches that drew me---the areas of few people, where space existed for thoughts to rise freely. Ocean City did not fulfill that need. The ancient mother's arms were too full. Too many had flung their burdensome bodies upon her breast. At any other time, on any *lonely* beach, the ocean would have won.

This vacation, the mountains triumphed.

When our children were quite small, we visited the Finger Lake region and walked up through Watkins Glen where the forces of nature are clearly revealed. This time, being older and hopefully wiser, we parked the car at the top of the gorge and walked down---a more leisurely way of doing it. There are *many* steps.

It was early morning in the Glen, cool and fresh. There had been rain the previous day and the walls dripped and sang with numerous rivulets. Ferns and flowers sparkled with miniature rainbows. Time seemed to stop, to hang suspended, its reckoning revealed only by changing shadows. There was no sense of needing, or wanting, to hurry, only a growing inclination to linger. Here passing ages and rushing waters have sculpture rock, marking it with graceful swirls, carving deep pools.

We walked slowly, pausing to leave the path, to pick our way among the boulders and finally to reach the mountain springs, letting the coolness of it caress our fingers. I kneeled beside the water, fascinated by the water-skimmers and minnows. Their shadows moved ahead of them on the bed of the stream, dark groupings that betrayed their presence.

"Come ye to the waters." There is something about water, whether tumbling over boulders, flowing through pastures, or breaking into foam on the beach---something restoring for the spirit of man.

As we walked down and down the Glen, our spirits soared up and up, effortless as the circling hawks. I realized we need not stand on a mountaintop to attain height and broader vision. One can descend and ascend at the same time. We need not stand on the shores of thundering ocean to be embraced by the forces of nature. In glen, deep forest, or peaceful, too, the anicent mother throws an arm around us, claiming us for her own.

We are children of earth, nurtured on her bounty, dependent on her resources. Our feet tread a lifetime upon her soil while our heads brush the clouds. And our souls? Always they are planning, charting, hoping to find a way among the stars.

THE JELLY-MAKER

Even with the snow still comforting
    the brown earth and bare boughs
she would think, occasionally, ahead
    to the spring-summer-autumn harvest
buying, occasionally, an extra
    bag of sugar –
one for the violets, one for the grapes,
two each, optimistically, for the berries,
    black...wild...red....

With red buds greening she would see
    the full fruit passing through her hands;
grateful, she would stand savoring
    another spring, glorying in the promise of
another year of joy in jelly-making.

Summer's several claims were forsaken
    over and over again for the kettle;
the boiling extracts filled her kitchen
    with sweet-scented steam,
a perfect medium for bits and pieces of dreams
    as she watched and stirred,
    stirred and watched...

Then, the culmination:
    pouring the jewel-bright essence
    into the shimmering jars;
    the sealing, then the stepping back
to admire and revel in the beauty –

offering thanks to the enabling Creator,
knowing satisfaction as her portion.

Pollyanna Sedziol

FLOWER SYMPHONY

HAVE YOU HEARD "the Flower Symphony"? There is "flower music" everywhere, but it takes a listening ear and a quiet heart to hear the melodies sung by the flowers. The tunes are as varied as the flowers themselves.

I never pass a hibiscus bush, aglow with brilliant red trumpets, but I hear martial music---the drum-beat of a mighty band marching on to victory. I walk by a white gardenia bush and hear songs of tenderness and love. In the far corner of our garden I stand near a poinciana tree. The showy red flowers shout happy melodies to me. Close by, a poinsettia sings a song of courage and devotion.

I sit very quietly, for only in this way can I hear the melodies pouring forth. A soft breeze ruffles the grass, and I can discern silver-toned arpeggios breaking forth from each blade. I am sure the mockingbirds hear it. They sit on the lawn, heads cocked to one side, to better attend the concert. A red cardinal perches on our pink cactus. His bright eyes shine as he listens to the tune of the cactus.

I never look at a field of golden daffodils without hearing their trumpet-solos of faith. The purple wistaria sings sad songs of unrequited faith. Violets hum the sweetest tunes to little children.

A tall coconut palm is the choral leader, using its long fronds to direct, sometimes fast, sometimes slow.

Such is "the Flower Symphony of the South."

But this is not all. The symphony has two parts. The second part is "the Flower Symphony of the North." This part has delighted me for years. Especially that section of it called "Springtime Song of Flowers." On a spring afternoon I have often stopped in wonder near a golden forsythia as it poured out rippling cadences and lively grace-notes.

The next time you are in a garden, take time to listen---oh so quietly, so very quietly. At first you may catch a note or two, then maybe only a snatch of a song. But if you wait patiently, the full symphony will burst forth.

Can't you hear it?

— *Georgiana Lieder Lahr*

The Holidays Jesus Observed

SAMUEL M. SILVER

Part Two / The Temple and the Synagogue

THE LOCUS of the sacrificial system eventually became the temple in Jerusalem. That sanctuary was said to have been built by King Solomon. His father King David had wanted to build such a place but was forbidden to do so because he had shed too much blood. In the temple the priests (*cohanim*) officiated. They handled the offerings, according to elaborate and precise procedures outlined in the Book of Leviticus. The temple was also the setting for levitical choirs that sang the prayerful petitions and accolades to the Lord which---many of them---are to be found in the Book of Psalms. The singers were accompanied by orchestral music with a plentiude of instruments: cymbals, harps, flutes, lutes, and so forth.

The idea of sacrifice itself was a development of the practice prevailing in other societies of appeasing the gods with human slaughter. That sounds odious to us until we remember that most wars are the offering-up of our young people in expiation for the faults of their elders, the worst of which is our inability to settle conflicts without violence.

The Jews were repelled by human sacrifice. The story of the near-

Tom Dunham

The Seder is many things – a meal, a series of games, a discussion, a re-enactment of the Hebrews' escape from Egypt and despotism

sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham is thought to be an expression of that revulsion.

Nonetheless, the idea of bequeathing something to God was firmly fixed among ancient peoples. We get a frightening reminder of it in the story of Jepthah and his daughter in the Book of Judges, regarded as a very old segment of the Bible. So, in time, the practice of sacrificing humans was transferred to the procedure of offering up animals or farm produce, and the concept was sublimated into the thought that the surrender of one's property was a test of one's compassion for the underprivileged---the recipients of all temple donations and oblations.

Gradually the worship of the Hebrews was centralized in King Solomon's temple. Every day the priests, among songs and prayers, accepted the contributions of the devout. Every Sabbath special litanies and liturgies were conducted. Every holiday was the occasion for special observancesreplete with sacrificial offerings.

Then, in 586 B.C.E., there was a calamity. The central sanctuary ---which up to that time had been believed to be sacrosanct, protected by God---was destroyed by the Babylonians, and the people were dragged off into exile. To lose the temple was to be abandoned by the Almighty. Since proper obeisance to Him could only be made in that special and sanctified place, to lose it meant that the worship of the Jews would now have to cease.

As a matter of fact, in the year 586 it seemed that the people was doomed to extinction. In 722 B.C.E., the Assyrians had swooped down, defeated the northern kingdom (Solomon's empire having been divided into two after his death), and driven out the populace. Never again did these people---the Ten Lost Tribes---surface on the earth. There were many legends about them and there still are many theories concerning their fate and destiny. Some believe they were taken to England (the word 'Britain' does sound like *brith*, the Hebrew for 'covenant'). Some believe the tribe of Dan was removed to Scandinavia; hence the name, Denmark. Some theorize that the present population of Japan derives from the lost tribesmen (the 'Jewpanese'?). Others would have it that the exiles drifted across the Bering Straits and became the progenitors of the Amerindians.

No matter what happened to them, however, Jews they did not remain. All that was left of the descendants of Abraham was the southern kingdom, consisting of the offspring of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

These people came to be called Judeans, which is the origin of the word Jew.

Thus in 586 when the same calamity befell the surviving Judeans, it did seem as if the curtain had been permanently lowered on the people of Moses. How, the Psalmist asks, can one praise God or play one's musical instrument in a foreign land?

We know, though, that the Babylonian exile did not repeat the scenario of the Assyrian one. We know why, too. Because, in Babylonia, great preachers and soul-comforters like Ezekiel and the sublime idealist known to us only as 'Second Isaiah' inspired the people to cling to their faith and to envision a return to the land. And eventually a return did take place, under Persian auspices. That was the first great Zionist movement in history.

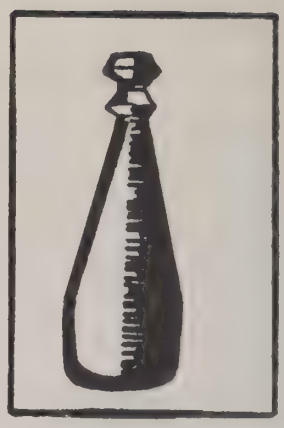
During their century-long sojourn in Babylonia, the Hebrews were cut off from the temple in Jerusalem and had to develop a new kind of worship. It was non-sacrificial, since offerings of animals and produce could technically be made solely in the main house of worship. The people gathered in meeting-halls where they recited prayers, intoned Psalms, sang hymns, spoke supplications, articulated their hopes, shared their thoughts, and exchanged messages and interpretations of Holy Writ. This was the birth of the institution we now called the synagogue, from a Greek word meaning "to assemble."

Cyrus, King of Persia, authorized the return of the Jews to the Jewish homeland. Because of this he is referred to in the Bible as 'a messiah.' And when, under Ezra and Nehemiah, the people did return to the sacred land, they began the laborious task of rebuilding the temple. In the meanwhile, however, the custom of worshipping in meeting-halls had become fixed. The synagogue flourished alongside of the ultimately-rebuilt central shrine. Later, when the reconstructed sanctuary was demolished again (by the Romans in 70 A.D.), the synagogue proved to be the vehicle which kept the faith alive.

It gave birth to the church and the mosque.

The Seder

IN ADDITION TO the institutional observance of Passover



in the temple and synagogue, the Exodus holiday began to take place in the home in a rite which is unparalleled in any other communion. The home celebration of Passover is called the Seder. That is a Hebrew word meaning "sequence" or "procedure"---and the procedure is utterly fascinating and meaningful. The *seder* of the Seder---that is, its order---evolved over the centuries. By Jesus's time it had grown into a multi-faceted event. It was held on the first evening of the week-long festival. Taking place around a table, it was a meal---but more than a meal. It was a worship gathering---but more than that. It was an educational experience--but it went beyond that. It was a songfest. An audio-visual operation -- A series of games. A round-robin discussion. And---transcending everything else---it was a re-enactment of the drama of the escape from Egypt, the first breakaway from despotism.

The Seder was---and is---a skein of blessings. The mother initiates the rites by blessing the lights. Every Jewish religious exercise includes such a ceremony, for light is regarded in Judaism as a symbol of escape from darkness. The blessing contains the usual formula for such statements: " 'Praised are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and required us to. . . ." Most blessings start with those words and, in the case of the candle-kindling, concluded " ". . . . to illumine the festive tapers."

The lights---symbol of man's ability to bring brightness to the world---are blessed. Then the wine is blessed. The Psalmist says that wine gladdens the heart of man and in order that that gladness be channeled towards exalted aims, the wine must be hallowed. The blessing over the wine is also a staple at all Jewish religious gatherings.

Next, God is lauded in special prayer as the "One who brings forth nourishment from the earth. In addition, the rite includes the holding-up and explicating of a series of symbolical foods. The first of these is parsley. Its greenness highlights the miracle of spring, with its resurgence of the verdure of the soil, reminding those around the table that Passover marks the onset of a new season of fertility and foliage. A special prayer thanks God for extricating "the fruit of the earth."

The main item of food on display at the Seder is the unleavened

bread, or matzoh. The matzoh recalls the Biblical narrative in which Pharoah rushed the Jews out of Egypt so rapidly that they had no time to bake bread and were obliged to make do with crackers. However, the matzoh came later to be looked upon as more than a memento of the hasty exit from Egypt. It reminded people around the table of the millions of fellow human beings who all year long have little more to eat. Eating the dessicated cracker is supposed to make you feel the hunger and despair of the impoverished and in this way hopefully to induce in you a willingness to share with the needy.

The Seder ritual refers to the matzoh as "bread of affliction." As the matzoh is held up, a call is made for all to declare "Let all who are hungry come and join us." This is a strong reminder of the spirit of hospitality which is prescribed for all Jewish households.

Another emblematic food at the Seder is the bitter herb---a reminder of the bitterness of slavery. Salt-water is provided, and one dips some food into it. The salt-water signifies the tears shed by the slaves and all of the world's disadvantaged. A concoction called *haroses* is a mixture of nuts and condiments made to resemble paste, which represents the mortar made by Hebrew slaves for the bricks used in the palatial structures they worked on, perhaps even the Pyramids.

Throughout the Seder ritual sounds the theme of human freedom. The Scriptural quotations, the special litanies, the Passover anthem "God of Might, God of Right," the informal interpolations by the head of the household---all of these underscore the principle of freedom and the necessity of the free to labor for the emancipation of the shackled.

The idea of gratitude is also accented in many of the songs, notably the one called *Dayenu*, which means "That would have been enough." This is a rundown of God's benefactions, its refrain being that one blessing is enough to suffice for us to raise our voices in gratitude.

Everyone is asked to take part in the singing, praying, and reading of the Seder ritual, but particular attention is focussed on children. Rehearsing the Biblical injunction that each year parents are "to tell the children" the saga of the Exodus, the youngsters are invited to ask "four questions." The four questions are meant to stress the fact that religious ideas must not be imposed upon children---that indeed they should be encouraged to demand explanations of beliefs and practices.

The children are also entertained and edified by a Seder song

called "An only Goat," in the course of which a goat is consumed by a cat, which in turn is gobbled up by a dog, which gets battered by the stick, which is burned by the fire until, at the final verse, God comes along to banish the Angel of Death. On its lowest level, it is a rollicking song. On a higher one, it depicts the procession of Big Powers that have traversed the stage of history, one consuming the other, and implicit in it is the messianic dream that ultimately all strife and even death will be vetoed by the Source of Life.

There is a powerful utterance in the Seder ritual which is a plea for empathy. Each worshipper is asked to regard himself as one who has felt the manacles of slavery on his wrists and the lash of the overseer on his back. This re-living of the anguish of servitude is meant to link worshippers not only with ancient sufferers but with those who have yet to taste liberation.

Over the years the rituals of the Seder were collected in a book called *Haggadah* ("The Story"). Everyone around the table holds his own copy of it and shares in the readings, some from the Bible, some from the Talmud, and some from the songs and liturgies of the past.

In this fashion Jesus and his family celebrated the festival of Passover. Some of the devotions occurred before the meal and some after it. When the meal was over, the children were sent out to look for bits of matzoh that had been hidden earlier. Those who were successful in this treasure-hunt were rewarded with coins or more dessert.

Jesus presided over the Seder at his last Passover in the Upper Room with the disciples. At that "last supper," as we know from the New Testament, Jesus gave a new meaning to the wine and the matzoh. That new meaning is the basis for Christianity's most sacred ritual---the Eucharist, the Mass, the communion. In this way two Jewish ceremonies flowed into the liturgy of the daughter faith, providing it with its central and most solemn rite.

Passover was also the time of year when the people journeyed to Jerusalem to make contact with the temple, offering sacrifices, enjoying the singing and instrumental music in the sanctuary, mingling with each other in vast throngs and glorifying the blessing of human liberty.

After the Jews were expelled from the Holy Land by the Romans, they were dispersed---and remained dispersed until the year 1948 of this era, although Jewish settlements never disappeared from Palestine.

In due time, however, those who dwelled elsewhere gravitated back to Jerusalem for the holidays whenever political and military circumstances permitted. The site of these convocations was again the sanctuary where now but one wall---the western one---remained. Then they would adjourn to the many synagogues in Palestine. These treks to the temple area constitute the origin of what we know as pilgrimages. The Jewish pilgrimages to Jerusalem were the forerunners of the Christian pilgrimages to the Holy Land and later to Rome and of the trips of devout Moslems to Mecca. Years afterwards, when a group of dissenters crossed the ocean in pursuit of religious autonomy, they came to be known as the Pilgrims. What linked the pilgrims of all ages was the Bible. And on Passover in the synagogues many passages from Holy Writ are read, especially those prescribing the observance of the festival.

On every Jewish holiday supplementary readings are called for. One of them on Passover is the Song of Songs. These are love-lyrics, obviously romantic. What are they doing in the Bible? And why read them on Passover? They are in the Bible because the Bible takes cognizance of all manifestations of nature, physical and human. The Song of Songs was retained in the Biblical canon because the rabbinical sages insisted that the lyrics reflected not the passion of a human lover for his beloved and vice versa, but of God (depicted as the lover) for His people (the beloved).

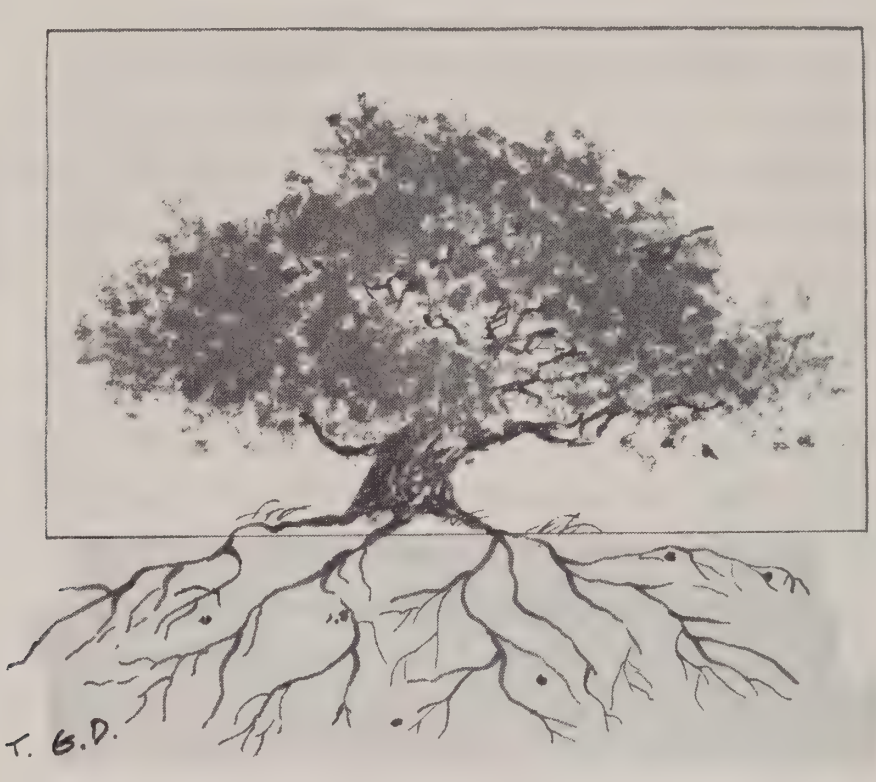
Actually, the Song of Songs was connected to Passover because Passover is the celebration of spring, when a young man's fancy turns, in the words of a modern wit, to what the young woman thinks about all the year long.

Connecting the temple observance and the table celebration---and also linking Judaism to its daughter faith---is the Book of Psalms. Psalms were intoned in the days of Jesus in the house of prayer and at home during the Seder. A portion of this celebration is called *Hallel,* related to the word "hallelujah"---Hebrew for "Praise the Lord." Psalm 118 is recited, Psalm 114 also.

We see the evolution of Passover. It originated as a farmer's holiday, a time of respite before spring planting. On this agricultural fete was attached an historical event---the Exodus. The theme of the holi-

day thus came to be that of human freedom. Similar developments took place in two other nature festivals, as we shall see.

(The third part of this article will be published in the next issue)



DEAR LORD

We laugh at what we live with because
we do not wish to cry, knowing we would drown
in our own Noah's tears. The ark will float
away onto our greedy dreams and we will not find
you until the dove wings back the branch
of beginning over again.

O Lord, hear my cries of unknowing, give me
cubits to build my ark, the poles of strength
to move it out of errant decision
to faithful completion.

Let my hands create and carry the holy
tabernacle of the old testament into the new.
No longer let my wilderness wander me.
Set my feet into the path
signed straight. --*Nixeon Civille Handy*

AN ENCOUNTER WITH ERNST TOLLER

JERRE MANGIONE

(An excerpt from AN ETHNIC AT LARGE: A Memoir of America in the Thirties and Forties, to be published this month by G.P.Putnam's Sons, New York.Copyright by Jerre Mangione and used with his permission.)

THROUGH MY LEAGUE OF AMERICAN WRITERS' activities, I met Ernst Toller, the German poet and playwright, who had come to Washington to promote a plan for feeding the starving children of Spain. An exile and foe of Nazi Germany, Toller naturally favored the Loyalist cause, but the motive of his mission was humanistic, not political. He wanted to feed all hungry Spanish children, be they the children of Fascists or Loyalists.

Until our encounter, I had no knowledge of his mission. My purpose in seeking him out was to invite him to speak to the membership of the League. When I phoned his room from the Mayflower Hotel lobby, the girl who answered may have assumed I was someone else for she asked me to come up, even before I could tell her my name. From the moment I entered the room I felt like an actor in a surrealistic dream. Toller ignored me at first. He was pacing up and down a tiny floor space in front of a bed, with a cream puff in one hand and a sheaf of papers in the other, dictating in various directions as though he were surrounded by a battery of stenographers, his sensitive face drawn tight with worry. The only other person in the room was a girl bent over a typewriter looking even more worried as she tried to type out what he was saying in his heavy accent.

When Toller finally noticed me, he put the cream puff on the bed, shook hands without hearing my name and handed me a manuscript. "Here, read this, and please hurry. We have little time. Make sure the English is all right. Oh, what a difficult language!" The urgency of his manner made my own business seem inconsequential; I made no effort to explain it. I began instead proofreading his statement on how it would be possible with the aid of the Friends Service Committee to bring food to the hungry children of Spain. I worked as fast as possible, correcting spellings and grammatical errors, and handed the corrected page to the girl for typing. Meanwhile, Toller was running around the room, collecting pages from the floor and under the bed, moaning over and over again that the gentlemen of the

press were due in a few minutes. The success of his mission depended on the press conference; it would not do to keep the journalists waiting, he told us. How were we coming along with his statement? By that time, I too was munching on a cream puff and sneaking nervous glances at the clock.

The statement was finally completed. The typist was pale with exhaustion. I handed her the box with the rest of the cream puffs, and the three of us rushed upstairs to the room where the conference was to take place. When we arrived, breathless, expecting to see a swarm of journalists, we found no one. Except for a table with a glass and a water pitcher and twenty gilded chairs, the room was bare. Toller took to floor-pacing again, while I tried to assure him that newspaper people in my country were congenitally tardy. Actually I knew nothing about their sense of punctuality, but by now Toller seemed like an old and valuable friend whom I must protect from his own anxieties. Toller, not assured, was certain no one would show up and feared his mission was "doomed" because "yours is a country where nothing can be accomplished without the help of publicity."

Twenty minutes after the appointed time, a young man with a slouch hat walked in and asked me if I was Ernst Toller. I rushed him over to Toller, who greeted him effusively, as if he were the most important journalist in America, and offered him a cigaret. I lighted the cigaret and offered him the press statement and a gilded chair. But our zeal was cut short by the young man's explanation that he was not a newspaperman but a great admirer of Toller's writings. Would Mr. Toller oblige him with his autograph? I was afraid that Toller had run out of patience and would turn on the young man. But instead he smiled sadly, wrote out his name, and thanked him for reading his books.

The journalists began arriving a little later. Toller became a changed man in their presence. The woebegone look disappeared; he radiated charm and confidence as he concentrated on the task of interesting the audience in his food plan. They listened attentively and, judging by the questions they asked, were affected by his sincerity. When the questions and comments were over, Toller nodded in my direction and announced that his "assistant" would now give each of them a copy of his prepared statement. There were a few more questions, one of which brought out the fact that Toller had left Germany when Hitler was coming into power, in 1932, and that for the past year he had been living in New York City. Then the conference was over.

Toller and I shook hands with the reporters as they filed out of the room. When we had said goodbye to the last one, he turned to me and said, "By the way, what did you say your name was?"

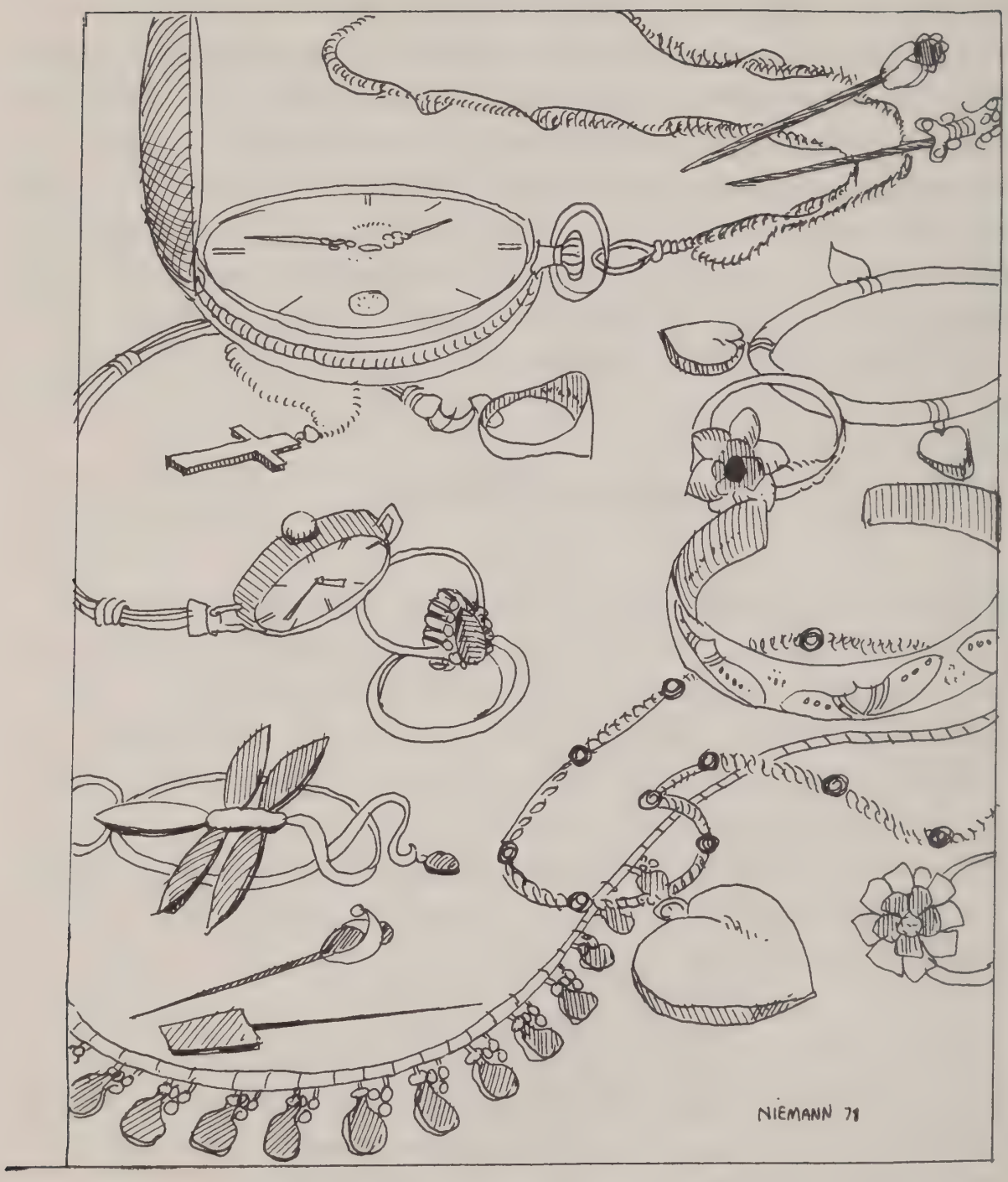
Toller's plan for feeding the Spanish children, though supported by Eleanor Roosevelt, never materialized. He was unable to get the cooperation of the State Department, nor was he able to persuade enough liberal groups to set aside their differences long enough to help him promote the plan. A few months after our encounter, in the loneliness of a New York hotel room, he hanged himself. He was then forty-eight years old. The failure of his plan for the Spanish children probably had little connection with his suicide, but it may well have contributed to the despair he must have experienced for a world where, repeatedly in the face of danger, men and women of goodwill were unwilling to act together for their mutual benefit.

SMOKE

Out of the smoke
and out of the heart
came a bird
much like a sparrow is
yet, it was of indefinite shape
and the night
wind heard it not.
As there were no night, nor wind
But visage,
images that
could be.

—*Joy Bergman*

A MINISTER WRITES TO A THIEF



Peter James Lee is minister of The (Episcopal) Chapel of the Cross in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. When his home was burglarized last January, some antique jewlery belonging to his wife Kristina was stolen. Mr Lee wrote the following letter to the thief. It is reprinted here with the permission of THE CHAPEL HILL NEWSPAPER.

DEAR THIEF,

You planned it well. You came in that brief period of time right before the Super Bowl when Kristy had left to take our children's friends home and the house was empty. You must have been watching us. Most chilling to think about, you may have been in the house before.

You went right to the dresser. You made no fuss, no mess. You lifted many pieces of jewelry. Their values in dollars, so the appraiser tells us, is substantial.

You now have the old ring Kristy's grandfather gave her grandmother in Norway before they came to America, with its tender engraved Norwegian message still clear. But you can never have the love, the memories that ring has symbolized for decades.

You have another grandmother's engagement ring. She's been dead for nearly thirty years. Her great-granddaughter would have had the ring, eventually. But you can never have the name inherited in the same family, with loyalty and affection for generations.

You have the twin Georgian rings. But you can never have the exciting experience of discovering them together in the spring dawn of a London market on the South Bank of the thames.

You have the tiny cross our daughter's grandmother gave her at her baptism. But you can never have the cherishing that went with it.

You have just about every trinket, ring, little stone that I have given to Kristy on birthdays, anniversaries, and Christmases past. But you have never seen her eyes when she opened the gifts for the first time; you have never felt my pride when she wore a ring, a pin, a little chain, given and received in love.

You have the pin, the ring, heirlooms in families of special friends, given in trust that they deserved the family to which they came. But you will never hear the stories behind them, the laughter and tears they beautified for generations, nor can you have the warmth of friendship that stirred the gifts.

You have the golden chains that gave Kristy a special elegance when she dressed up. But what makes her lovely is withheld from you forever.

You have our finest things.

But you can never have our treasures.

They remain in our hearts, not locked, not protected, but there to share in Love.

PETER JAMES LEE

to be approached through millions of openings. . . ."

He said also, "I claim to be a man of faith and prayer, and even if I were to be cut to pieces I trust God would give me the strength not to deny Him, but to assert that He is. The Musselman says, 'He is, and there is no one else.' The Christian says the same thing, and so does the Hindu. If I may venture to say so, the Buddhist also says the same thing, only in different words. It is true that we may each of us be putting our own interpretation on the word 'God.' We must of necessity do so; for God embraces not only this tiny globe of ours, but millions and billions of such globes and worlds beyond worlds. How can we, little crawling creatures, possibly measure His greatness, His boundless love, His infinite compassion? So great is His infinite love and pity that He allows men insolently to deny Him, to wrangle about Him, and even to cut the throat of his fellow man. . . .

"I confess that I have no argument to convince through reason. Faith transcends reason. All I can advise is not to attempt the impossible. I cannot account for the existence of evil by any rational method. To want to do so is to be co-equal with God. . . . I know that He has no evil in Himself; and yet if there is evil He is the author of it and is untouched by it."

Gandhi saw evil as sharply as he saw good, and he saw it where it is, in each individual person. He said:

"I know, too, that I shall never know God if I do not wrestle with and against evil, even at the cost of life itself. . . . How much more should I be near Him when my faith is not a mere apology, as it is today, but has become as immovable as the Himalayas and as white as the snows on their peaks?"

Believing truthful things, Gandhi used the same things to fight against evil. He said. "The only way love punishes is by suffering." He said also, "There is only one fundamental Truth, which is Truth itself, otherwise known as non-violence. . . . I discovered in the earliest stages that pursuit of Truth did not admit of violence being inflicted upon one's opponent, but that he must be weaned from error by patience and sympathy."

For what good is it to hurt evil men? Truth is in all men, making them one, and not in a few of them, making them separate. To do hurt to

any man is to do hurt to oneself, for to injure him is to injure Truth and thus to hurt the whole world. Nor is there good in forcing a man toward outward goodness by fear of injury, for evil is not only what men make other men suffer but what men think within themselves. "A man who broods on evil," Gandhi wrote, "is as bad as a man who does evil, if he is no worse." Therefore when violence is fought with violence it begets greater violence. Evil grows and man is cast into slavery. Gandhi said, ". . . . the light within me is steady and clear. There is no escape for any of us save through Truth and non-violence."

But, hating evil, Gandhi would not let men run off from evil. He said, "Between violence and cowardly flight I can only prefer violence to cowardice. I can no more preach non-violence to a coward than I can tempt a blind man to enjoy healthy scenes."

What shall men do if they can neither fight violently against evil nor yet run passively away from it? What Gandhi experimented with and what he demonstarted was the power of Truth, whereby one does not cause suffering to others but takes suffering upon oneself. For the Truth that is in men is touched by such suffering. "There is no one so fallen in this world," Gandhi said, "but can be converted by love." He drew no sharp line between this practical world of God's and that other timeless world of God's: A man who loses his life to save it, saves not only for that other world but for this one. Truth is not only active hereafter but active now, for now is a part of hereafter, and one spirit suffuses both.

Therefore Gandhi said, "Self-sacrifice of one innocent man is a million times more potent than the sacrifice of millions of men who die in the act of killing others." "It does not mean meek submission to the will of the evildoer, but it means the putting one's soul against the will of the tyrant."

"If blood be shed," he therefore declared, "let it be our blood. Cultivate the quiet courage of dying without killing." And in his own life and in his own words he showed that this self-sacrificing power of Truth could be used by men or women or children, that it could be used against the evils of a father or an empire, the injustices of a neighbor or a corporation. And he proved that, while other means sewed bitterness, the power of Truth alone reaped a spirit of unity, even in a world given over to turmoil.

"Whether mankind will consciously follow the law of love," he said,

"I do not know. But that need not disturb us. The law will work just as the law of gravitation works, whether we accept it or not. The man who discovered for us the law of love was a far greater scientist than any of our modern scientists. Only our explorations have not gone far enough and so it is not possible for everyone to see all its workings."

Gandhi lived that he might make these explorations. When he saw injustice, he would not work with it.When he saw untruth, he would not stay beside it. But he would suffer against evil, sacrifice himself against injustice, and die against untruth. The Truth he loved was his weapon against what he hated. This was his explanation, his discovery, his teacher, and his prayer.

(This article has been adapted by Herrymon Maurer from his book GREAT SOUL, published by Doubleday shortly after the death of Gandhi in 1948.)

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Understanding Human Nature, *by James K. Feibleman, Horizon, $8.95.* Would you like a portrait of yourself? The author of this book gives each reader an idea of what he or she is like. As a bonus, the author also offers us a picture of how society functions. If the old philosopher who urged each one to "know thyself" was making a valid point, this volume serves a significant purpose. It enables us to understand our drives and our needs.

Feibleman distinguishes between what is important and what is importunate. He enables us to differentiate between the momentary and the momentous. He also profiles "society," offering an idea of what is behind human organizations and organisms.

The crucial question is: "Can human nature change?" Are we chained to our present circumstances? Can the evils of the world be transcended? The news is good and bad. Changes can be made, but, alas, they are slow in happening. Which means that we must try a bit harder. Changes have occurred in the past and, if we are strongly motivated, we can help push humanity ahead toward "promised lands."

A Big Jewish Book, *edited by James Rothenberg with Harris Lenowitz and Charles Doria, Anchor Press, Doubleday, $12.95.* The book is big, all right. And it contains something for everyone, especially those fascinated by the occult. It is the contention of this reviewer that mainstream Judaism is rational, not obscurantist. But there is much in Jewish folklore, as it has developed over the centuries, which is in the realm of the exotic.

Exotica is in evidence in much of this quaint volume. Poetry and Biblical exegesis and mysticism abound. Even we rationalists can enjoy these fantasies, so long as we don't take them seriously. Your convinced mystic will find guidance here. The rest of us will find entertainment. . . . Chacun a son gout. Some of us feel that "mystic" should be spelled "mistake." But let the reader make up his own mind.

Messengers of God, *by Elie Weisel, Pocket Books (paperback), $1.95.* The stories in the Bible were later embellished by commentators whose

writings are to be found in documents known as the Mishnah, the Talmud, and the Midrash. The purpose of these elaborations was to enhance the devoutness of the Jew and to show the rewards that all people can attain from closer attunement to the wishes of God. Weisel, known as 'the Holocaust man' because of his reminders of the savagery of the Nazis and the indifference of the world, here turns his considerable skill to paraphrasing some of these stories. He does so charmingly and entrancingly. One realizes the difference between ordinary legendry and folk-tales in general---the latter are designed to edify, the former to educate.

Astrology Disproved, *by Lawrence E. Jerome, Prometheus Books, Buffalo, $14.95.* During paper shortages, newspapers will often eliminate many items, sometimes even advertisements, but not the horoscope columns. We don't often focus on the popularity of astrology in our culture. Look in your telephone directory and see how many professional star-gazers there are. Yet the whole business of astrology is a fraud and a fake, according to this book. The notion that our fate is determined by celestial bodies is an ancient one. The author laboriously traces the course of astrology from olden times to our own era, telling us how astronomy separated from astrology, how the Church combatted this pseudo-science, how futile has been the effort to prove there is no substance to the claims of "the seers." A fascinating book, which should convince readers that our destinies are molded not by heavenly bodies but by the Almighty.

Act of God, *by Charles Templeton, Little Brown, $8.95.* There's an old jest that Israel once cabled the Vatican: 'Cancel Easter. Body found.' Believe it or not, that is the eerie theme of this gripping novel by a writer listed as a seasoned journalist and churchman.

Set in a period some years beyond the present, the proposition is made very plausible by the author. The reader is mesmerized by the fast-moving plot in which two onetime Princeton classmates, an archaeologist and a cardinal, find themselves ensnared in each other's life. This thriller has a bit of everything---peeks behind the scenes at the Vatican, romance between a pair of well-limned lovers, some snippets of theology and archeology, plus some well-crafted prayers! ---S. M. S.

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ONENESS

Marion J. Richardson

Even though the body
no longer functions
normally, the mind and soul
can grow to greater heights.
Just as leaves on trees
wither, the outer beauty may
be gone, but the inner self
gains in momentum, making
the tree or body whole again.
If we serve the Lord with
faith and love, one can feel
His presence in the peace and
serenity ... no separate inner
or outer --- only the harmonious
oneness.